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Easter eggs, children's drawings, and pictures showing architecture and interior and exterior decoration. To these objects, which are the material for direct instruction, were added some prints showing the natural setting within which Bohemian or Slovak art grew up; an ethnic map, showing where and among whom the Czecho-Slovaks live and work; and a portrait of John Huss, presiding over all, symbol of the subsoil of emotion in which Czecho-Slovak art is rooted.

The wise in textile lore who visited the exhibition commented upon the varieties of patterns and of stitches, upon the directness of inspiration from nature shown by the conventionalizations used, upon the courage and the integrity shown in choice and handling of color, upon the richness of design and the freedom of technique, and upon the thousand and one ways in which the facts of race and nationality can speak through the point of a needle. Tyrolean contagion, Teutonic sophistication, Magyar motifs, Mohammedan influence, sacerdotal symbolism can all be acknowledged or discounted; we can still read here the message of a people's soul, rippling out through the finger-tips of its women, and organizing itself, through the endless items of personal adornment and personal service, to form a unit of ethnic art which, in Carlylean phrase, is "significant of much."

American visitors have been many: for the exhibition, quite fortuitously, occurred at a time when the peculiar position of the Czecho-Slovak peoples, technically our foes, really the barometer of our purposes in the new game of ethnic chess, was absorbing much agitated attention.

Bohemian visitors also have been many. The Bohemian colony of New York, some thirty to fifty thousand in number, lies not far from the Museum, and the cultured inhabitants of the district, of whom there are many, are among its frequenters. To the young this exhibition has given a clearer knowledge of the respect due their well-nigh immediate ancestors for a no mean contribution to the beauty love, and the beauty strife, of the world. And to the old has come a sense of recognition and an incen-

tive to renewed endeavor in their national art.

When the offspring of the artificers of many lands habitually come in, and habitually stay awhile among the culled artifacts of many lands, spread for their enlightenment, there can be no doubt, to bring the matter down to its lowest terms, that the markets of many lands will some day reap the results.

LOUISE CONNOLLY.

SARGENT'S PORTRAIT OF PRESIDENT WILSON

THROUGH the courtesy of the Governors of the National Gallery of Ireland, and with the acquiescence of President Wilson, the portrait which John S. Sargent has recently painted of the President for that gallery will be exhibited in our Museum for a month, beginning on January 12.

As the circumstances which brought about the painting of this portrait have been frequently misrepresented, the following statement of the facts, which is given upon the best authority, will be of interest, and is due as a matter of justice to those who are chiefly concerned:

Shortly after the outbreak of the European war there was an auction sale at Christie's for which many artists, Mr. Sargent among others, gave pictures or drawings. Perhaps suggested by this incident, he was subsequently informed by the British Red Cross that an offer of the sum of ten thousand pounds had been made to it if Mr. Sargent would paint a picture of the proposed donor. Mr. Sargent naturally agreed. This offer afterward fell through, but was later taken up by Sir Hugh Lane, who was drowned on the Lusitania. By his will he left his collection to The National Gallery of Ireland, which generously respected his intentions with regard to The British Red Cross, paid the sum promised to it, and selected for the subject of the proposed portrait by Mr. Sargent, "The President of the United States."

It will thus be seen that in the last instance the order for the portrait at the price named went to Mr. Sargent from the

Governors of the Dublin Gallery. Credit therefore belongs to them for a generous action to which they might not have felt themselves strictly committed, and Mr.

Sargent is relieved of the imputation of having suggested that he should paint a portrait at this figure, even for the benefit of the Red Cross.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

PURCHASE OF TWO PAINTINGS BY EAKINS. Two paintings by Thomas Eakins which were shown in the memorial exhibition of his work held here recently, have been bought by the Museum from the artist's family. They are *The Writing Master* and *The Thinker*, both summits of his accomplishment in their respective lines, and valuable augmentations of the representation in our collection of this virile and sterling master.¹

The Writing Master, a portrait of the artist's father, painted in 1882, shows the leaning toward Rembrandtesque effects of light and shade which marks his earlier work, of which *The Gross Clinic* is the most important example. The light is from above and falls on the sitter's bald forehead and on his strong and sensitive hands as he sits at a table filling out a parchment diploma, the tenderly painted old face being in half-shadow. Every inch of the work has been dwelt upon with reverent care, bespeaking the preciousness to the painter of each detail of likeness and character, but his enthusiasm was at its height in the portrayal of the hands. Outside of a few pictures by the same artist, it is difficult to recall in the whole course of American art hands of such solidity and expression. Their structure and flexibility are what is evident at first sight. They seem alive; one almost expects that at a second look they will have moved to another position. Then one notices details to the

minutest, how each wrinkle about the knuckles and each unevenness of the skin has been set down. But the expression of the sure and delicate strength and the kindliness that these fingers are capable of is more astounding than the form. The *Writing Master* might have for a second title, *The Portrait of a Pair of Hands*. On leaving the picture one wonders if the hands one sees in life have really such possibilities of revelation.

The Thinker is dated 1900. Here are the same qualities of structure and character but, in distinction to the other work, executed impersonally, in the way that Velazquez or Piero della Francesca approached their subjects, and in the more austere lighting of Eakins's later period. The man is in front of a light wall with no accessories, the dark figure standing out in monumental prominence against it. He is not posing; he is unconscious even that he is observed. It is a distinctly American type. The nervous, loosely jointed body is perfectly realized under the carelessly worn clothes. The title explains the picture unnecessarily. Lost in thought he stands, with hands in pockets, his head forward, and the shoulders leaning back from the waist in the even balance of the posture. A college professor, perhaps, but certainly absent-minded, idealistic, and somewhat eccentric—the sort that would be apt to get into disputes with his faculty. It is an illuminating portrait.

Thomas Eakins reminds us anew that, for those who comprehend, all our actions and attitudes are so many complete confessions.

B. B.

¹The two pictures by Thomas Eakins already owned by the Museum are *The Chess Players*, shown in Gallery 12, and *Pushing for Rail*, in Gallery 13.